



AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX
**E-GOVERNMENT
SATISFACTION INDEX**

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CITIZEN SATISFACTION DOWN SLIGHTLY AS GOVERNMENT LAGS THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Citizen satisfaction with federal government websites has declined slightly this quarter, according to the first quarter 2007 release of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index. The aggregate score of 73.4 on the ACSI's 100-point scale is down .7% from last quarter and slightly lower from the aggregate score of 73.5 measured one year ago. Despite this score decrease, citizens remain more satisfied with e-government than with government as a whole. The aggregate ACSI E-Government of 73.4 continues to outpace the overall ACSI federal government score (which is primarily offline) of 72.3 by 1.5%.

This quarter, the trend of relatively unchanged citizen satisfaction continues. For the past seven quarters, the aggregate ACSI E-Government score has been between 73.5 and 74. The reason behind this plateau is multi-faceted. Even though website improvements are occurring, citizens' standards for what makes a good web experience continue to climb, shaped by their experiences on both the public and private sector sites they visit. And in many ways, the online public sector has not evolved as quickly as the private sector web world.

Many private sector sites have been transformed into what is known as "Web 2.0," where Rich Internet Applications and user-generated content have made the Internet a more responsive, interactive and user-controlled experience. While Web 2.0 is a broad term that can include a lot of applications and functionality, the end result is a website that is more user-centric and better able to meet the needs and demands of its site visitors. This evolution has increased the pressure on government websites by driving up the citizens' standards of a high quality web experience. Because of the unique nature of government sites, some of these innovations don't apply to the government, while others have not been adopted as quickly because of budgetary and resource constraints.

However, recent news from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is encouraging. Late last year, OMB announced the addition of customer satisfaction measurement into the President's Management Scorecard, a positive move for making federal government websites more citizen-centric, rather than internally focused. Also encouraging is the fact that almost 46% of scores for sites measured in the ACSI E-Government Index have risen from one year ago.

The first quarter 2007 E-Government ACSI report looks at the 80 sites in the index in two ways: functionally and organizationally. The four functional categories parallel private sector sites measured by the ACSI: portals/department main sites, information/news sites, e-commerce/transactional sites and career-recruitment sites. We've also categorized sites into three categories based on government structure: department-level, agency-level and program sites.

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Key Findings

- From last quarter, 49% of sites saw lower satisfaction than last quarter, while 31% had score increases and 20% had no change in scores
- Eight sites, including the Bureau of Economic Analysis (<http://www.bea.gov>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov), had satisfaction score increases of three points or more from last quarter sites
- The Department of Health and Human Services continues to have the highest aggregate satisfaction score of all the departments with five or more measured sites

THE ACSI METHODOLOGY

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the ACSI, which is produced by the University of Michigan in partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ), ForeSee Results and the CFI Group. The ACSI is a cross-industry measure of offline customer satisfaction that measures the performance of approximately 200 private sector companies, as well as many government agencies. ForeSee Results collects and analyzes the data for the e-government websites included in the report.

ACSI e-government scores were calculated based on data gathered from voluntary online surveys of randomly selected site visitors. Each government website was rated by its visitors on various components of overall satisfaction. The ratings were converted to a score on a 100-point scale using the ACSI methodology.

The ACSI methodology identifies key drivers of satisfaction and quantifies their relationship to overall customer satisfaction. Going further, this cause-and-effect methodology predicts how customers will behave in the future and demonstrates the impact of website enhancements on customer satisfaction, customer behavior and ultimately, the bottom line.

COMPARISONS TO OTHER ACSI SCORES

The chart below compares quarter-over-quarter e-government scores to the quarterly ACSI cross-industry index aggregate score. This shows that e-government still has room for improvement against the private sector and that the public/private sector gap has started to widen slightly.

Comparison of ACSI Aggregate and E-Government Scores	Q4 2006	Q1 2007	Quarter over Quarter Change
	ACSI E-Government Aggregate	73.9	73.4
ACSI Aggregate (Cross-industry, offline and online)	Q3 2006	Q4 2006	Quarter over Quarter Change
	74.4	74.9	.7%

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Note that the comparison period for the cross-industry ACSI score is different because the scores are published later than the e-government scores.

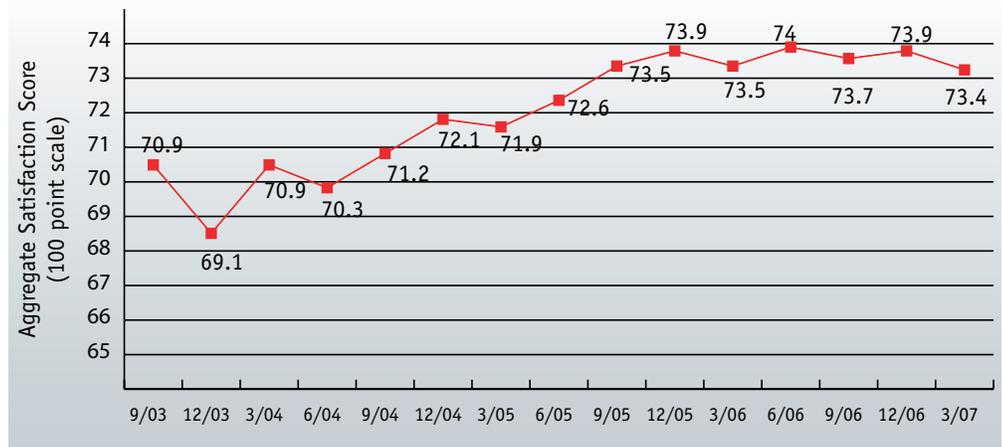


Citizens' perceptions of the government sites they visit are shaped by their experiences at other private and public sector sites. Therefore, a comparison to comparable private sector industries is meaningful. The chart below shows that the aggregate score for e-government satisfaction continues to trail the most recent ACSI customer satisfaction scores for e-commerce (online retail, travel, auction and brokerage) and e-business (news/information sites, search engines and portals) by a significant margin.

Comparison of ACSI E-Government and Online Private Sector Scores	Aggregate Satisfaction Score
e-Government Q1 2007	73.4
e-Business Q2 2006	76.5
e-Commerce Q4 2006	80

E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION OVER TIME

The chart below shows the trend in citizen satisfaction with government websites from 3rd quarter 2003 through 1st quarter 2007.



CDC AND GOBIERNO USA JOIN TOP PERFORMERS GROUP

This quarter, 16 sites (20% of the total) qualified as "top performers," meaning that they have scores of 80 or higher. Two sites from the Social Security Administration lead the pack [Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>) and Internet Social Security Benefits Application (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html>)], while two sites join the top performers group for the first time this quarter: the main site for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) and GobiernoUSA (www.gobiernousa.gov), the Spanish-language portal to the government (formerly FirstGov).

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E-Government US Agency/Department/Office <i>Top Performers</i>	Website	3/07 Score
Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html	86
Social Security Administration	Internet Social Security Benefits Application https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html	86
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	85
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp/	84
Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bsa/bsowelcome.htm	84
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/	84
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/	83
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanolwww.cancer.gov/espanol	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov/	82
General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website— www.gobiernousa.gov	82
General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center www.pueblo.gsa.gov/	81
National Institutes of Health Office of Science Education	OSE Main http://science-education.nih.gov/	81
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm	80
United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog— http://catalog.usmint.gov	80
United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website— www.usmint.gov	80
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website— www.cdc.gov	80

SEARCH AND NAVIGATION CONTINUE TO BE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Citizen satisfaction is determined by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) methodology through an equation that takes into account satisfaction with different elements of the website experience. The table below shows satisfaction scores with each of these elements for this quarter and last:

Element	Q4 2006	Q1 2007	% Change
Site Performance	82	82	0%
Privacy *	82	81	-1%
Tasks/Transactions*	79	80	1%
Content	80	79	-1%
Image *	77	78	1%
Functionality	77	77	0%
Look & Feel	78	77	-1%
Navigation	73	73	0%
Search	74	73	-1%

*Measured by small number of sites

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Government sites are doing a good job with site performance, but have room to improve the navigation and search scores. The ACSI methodology also looks at where improvements in specific elements would have the most impact on satisfaction and desired future behaviors, such as return visits to the site and recommendations. Once again, search is the top priority for improvement, and was the first or second highest impact element for 88% of measured sites.

Even as search and navigation remain large issues for government websites (as with private sector sites), many agencies and departments are making additional information available online. But, they won't see the full benefits of these initiatives unless citizens are able to quickly and easily locate the information they seek.

FUTURE BEHAVIOR SCORES REMAIN STEADY

Satisfaction drives desired future behaviors. As a result of the relatively small change in satisfaction, all future behavior scores remain constant from last quarter:

- Likelihood to Return: 83
- Likelihood to Recommend: 79
- Likelihood to Use Site as a Primary Resource: 76

CITIZEN SATISFACTION BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

The table below shows aggregate citizen satisfaction with each of the four functional categories of sites. The smallest category, Recruitment/Career sites, was the only one able to maintain its score from last quarter. All other categories saw modest declines in aggregate citizen satisfaction.

Category	Q4 2006	Q1 2007	Quarter over Quarter % Change
Portals/Department Main Sites	74.9	74.1	-1.1%
News/Information	72.9	72.8	-0.1%
E-commerce/Transactions	74.5	74.2	-0.4%
Recruitment/Careers	77.2	77.2	0

Portals/Department Main Sites

The average satisfaction score for the 20 sites in this category is 74.1, down -1.1% since last quarter. Scores range from 65 to 82, with the National Cancer Institute's Main website (www.cancer.gov) and GobiernoUSA (www.gobiernousa.gov), the Spanish-language portal to the government, tied for the high score of 82.

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Forty-two percent of the measured portals/department main sites saw declines in citizen satisfaction from last quarter, while 40% had increased scores. The Internal Revenue Service (www.irs.gov), which made minor improvements to its search engine and the “most requested” forms link, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov), had impressive quarter-over-quarter increases of four points. The IRS increase is particularly impressive since approaching tax deadlines draw more first-time and infrequent visitors who are typically harder to please.

E-Government U.S. Agency/ Department/Office	Website	3/07 Score
Portals/Department Main Sites		
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov	82
General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website www.gobiernousa.gov	82
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm	80
United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website— www.usmint.gov	80
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website— www.cdc.gov	80
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website— www.nasa.gov	79
National Parks Service, Interior	National Parks Service main website— www.nps.gov	78
National Library of Medicine, HHS	NLM main website— www.nlm.nih.gov	75
Internal Revenue Service, Treasury	IRS main website— www.irs.gov	75
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website— www.sba.gov	73
General Services Administration	USAGov website— www.usa.gov	73
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website— www.fdic.gov	73
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website— www.gao.gov	72
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) www.socialsecurity.gov/	71
Department of State	Department of State main website— www.state.gov	71
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS	SAMHSA website www.samhsa.gov	70
General Services Administration	GSA main website— www.gsa.gov	70
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website— www.treasury.gov	67
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website— www.pbgc.gov	66
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website— www.archives.gov	65

News/Information Sites

The 41 sites in this largest category have an aggregate satisfaction score of 72.8, a drop of .1% from last quarter. Scores in this category range from 59 to 85. MedlinePlus (www.medlineplus.gov) leads this category.

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Three news/information sites had significant score increases from fourth quarter 2006. The Bureau of Economic Analysis (<http://www.bea.gov>) redesigned its site based on “voice of customer” feedback and usability testing and experienced a four-point quarter-over-quarter increase. The National Institute of Justice site (<http://www.ojp.gov/nij>) has added more content to its home page to meet users’ needs, resulting in improved navigation and a three-point increase in its customer satisfaction score.

GobiernoUSA, the Spanish-language portal to the government (GobiernoUSA.gov) had a three-point increase in its customer satisfaction score from last quarter, driven in part by a partnership with television network Univision.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	03/07 Score
Info/News		
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	85
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp/	84
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/	84
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/	83
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanol www.cancer.gov/espanol	82
General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center— www.pueblo.gsa.gov/	81
National Institutes of Health Office of Science Education	OSE Main http://science-education.nih.gov/	81
Department of Justice	President’s DNA Initiative— http://www.dna.gov	78
Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook http://www.bls.gov/oco/	78
Office on Women’s Health	National Women’s Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website— www.4woman.gov	78
NIH Senior Health, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Senior Health http://nihseniorhealth.gov	78
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	TOXNET — http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov	77
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA Presidential Library websites http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/index.html	76
National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice	NCJRS website www.ncjrs.gov	76
National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA main website www.drugabuse.gov	76
National Institute of Justice, Justice	NIJ main website— http://www.ojp.gov/nij	76
U.S. Department of Commerce	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/	75
National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA for Teens website http://teens.drugabuse.gov/	73

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E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office Info/News	Website	03/07 Score
General Services Administration	Consumer Action Website, Federal Citizen Information Center	73
Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality—www.ahrq.gov	73
Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice	OVC website www.ovc.gov	72
Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce	BEA main website—http://www.bea.gov	72
Department of State	U.S. Department of State Education USA http://educationusa.state.gov	72
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC Applications—www2.fdic.gov	72
Economic Research Service, Agriculture	ERS main website—www.ers.usda.gov	72
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	71
Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture	FSIS main website www.fsis.usda.gov	71
Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture	FAS main website—www.fas.usda.gov	71
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website www.nrc.gov	71
Center for Nutrition Policy Promotion, Agriculture	MyPyramid Website—www.MyPyramid.gov	70
National Agricultural Library, Agriculture	NAL main website—www.nal.usda.gov	69
International Information Programs, State	IIP main website—http://usinfo.state.gov	69
Financial Management Service, Treasury	Financial Management Service—www.fms.treas.gov	68
Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau	USTTB website www.ttb.gov	68
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Agriculture	CSREES main website www.csrees.usda.gov	65
Forest Service, Agriculture	Forest Service main website—http://www.fs.fed.us	63
Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture	NRCS website http://www.nrcs.usda.gov	62
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases--www.archives. gov/aad/index.html	62
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security	FEMA Flood Map Store: http://store.msc.fema.gov	62
General Services Administration	GSA E-Library—http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ ElibHome	59
Military Health System, Defense	TRICARE—www.tricare.osd.mil/	59

E-COMMERCE/TRANSACTIONAL SITES

The 13 sites in this category had an aggregate citizen satisfaction score of 74.2, down a slight .4% from last quarter. This category has the largest gap, 29 points, between the low score of 57 and the high score of 86. Two Social Security Administration websites have the high scores in the category, and in the Index as a whole: Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>) and Internet Social Security Benefits Application (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html>).

The GSA E-Buy site (<http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov>) had the largest quarter-over-quarter increase in the category: three points.

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E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	03/07 Score
<i>ecommerce/transaction</i>		
Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs -- https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html	86
Social Security Administration	Internet Social Security Benefits Application -- https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html	86
Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online -- http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm	84
United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog -- http://catalog.usmint.gov	80
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA - https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	78
SSA Retirement Planner	Social Security Retirement Planner -- www.socialsecurity.gov/r&m1.htm	76
General Services Administration	GSA Global Supply website -- https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov	73
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPAA - https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa	73
General Services Administration	GSA E-Buy -- http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov	71
General Services Administration	GSA Advantage website -- https://www.gsaadvantage.gov	68
Social Security Administration	Social Security Internet Disability Report -- http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/	68
Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt	TreasuryDirect -- www.treasurydirect.gov	64
General Services Administration	USDA Advantage -- http://www.usdaadvantage.gsa.gov	57

Career/Recruitment Sites

The five sites in this category had an aggregate score of 77.2 for the third quarter in a row. The Central Intelligence Agency's recruitment website (<http://www.cia.gov/employment>) and the Military Spouse Career Center (<http://www.military.com/spouse/>) have the highest score of 79, six points above the low category score of 73.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	03/07 Score
<i>recruitment/careers</i>		
Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website -- http://www.cia.gov/employment	79
Military Community and Family Policy Office, Defense	Military Spouse Career Center http://www.military.com/spouse/	79
Office of Personnel Management	Recruitment website -- www.usajobs.opm.gov	78
Department of Labor	Dept of Labor - www.dol.gov	77
Department of State	Recruitment website -- www.careers.state.gov	73

CITIZEN SATISFACTION BY ORGANIZATIONAL CATEGORIES

In addition to looking at sites by the four functional categories, we also analyze customer satisfaction data by the three organizational categories that match the way the federal government is structured: department sites (which includes independent agencies, corporations, administrations, etc.) agency sites (all entities that fall directly below a department or equivalent organization) and program sites (all others).

Program sites once again have the highest score: 77.2, which is up 2.7% from last quarter.

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	Q4 2006	Q1 2007	% Change
Department Sites	71.9	70.7	-1.6%
Agency Sites	72.6	73.0	.6%
Program Sites	75.2	77.2	2.7%

Department Sites

The table below shows the satisfaction scores for the 11 department and department-level sites included in the benchmark. Scores range from 65 to 79, with the main website for NASA (www.nasa.gov) on top with a score of 79.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	03/07 Score
Department		
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website—www.nasa.gov	79
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website—www.sba.gov	73
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website—www.fdic.gov	73
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website—www.gao.gov	72
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) www.socialsecurity.gov/	71
Department of State	Department of State main website—www.state.gov	71
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website www.nrc.gov	71
General Services Administration	GSA main website—www.gsa.gov	70
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website—www.treasury.gov	67
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website—www.pbpc.gov	66
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website—www.archives.gov	65

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TOPS DEPARTMENT RANKINGS

For the second quarter in a row, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has the highest aggregate citizen satisfaction score of the six departments that have five or more sites in the Index: 78.8.

Department	Q1 2007
Department of Health and Human Services	78.8
Social Security Administration	77.5
Department of Treasury	71.7
General Services Administration	70.6
Department of Agriculture	67.9

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CONCLUSION

While citizen satisfaction with federal government satisfaction has declined, customer satisfaction with the private sector, as measured by the cross-industry ACSI, is on the rise. As the private sector offers a more satisfying web experience, the public sector must evolve to keep pace with citizen's ever-increasing standards for what constitutes a satisfying web experience.





The good news is that many sites are doing more to better meet citizens' needs. Eight sites saw increases of three points or more since last quarter, and almost half (46%) of the sites have higher scores now than they did one year ago. And, the recent announcement by the Office of Budget Management (OMB) truly elevates customer satisfaction to a key metric and is a positive sign toward making online government as a whole more citizen-centric.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larry Freed is an expert on Web Effectiveness and Web Customer Satisfaction. He is also President and CEO of ForeSee Results, a market leader in customer satisfaction measurement on the web, which utilizes the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

ABOUT THE ACSI

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the only uniform, national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States. In 1999, the Federal government selected the ACSI to be a standard metric for measuring citizen satisfaction. Over 100 Federal government agencies have used the ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction of more than 200 services and programs. The Index is produced by the University of Michigan, in partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ) and CFI Group, an international consulting firm. ForeSee Results sponsors the e-commerce, e-business and e-government indices.

ABOUT FORESEE RESULTS, INC.

ForeSee Results is the market leader in online customer satisfaction measurement and management and specializing in converting satisfaction data into user-driven web development strategies. Using the methodology of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), ForeSee Results has created a model that scientifically quantifies the elements that drive online customer satisfaction and predicts future behaviors, including the likelihood to return to the site or recommend the site to others. ForeSee Results, a privately held company located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, can be found online at www.ForeSeeResults.com.

ABOUT THE FEDERAL CONSULTING GROUP

The Federal Consulting Group, a franchise of the Department of the Treasury, serves as the executive agent in the government for the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), and holds generic clearance from the Office of Management and Budget that enables agencies to utilize the ACSI without having to obtain a separate clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act to conduct customer satisfaction surveys. Agencies can participate in the ACSI through an arrangement between the Federal Consulting Group and ForeSee Results.

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